

## ARTICLE 34

### Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

#### Marriage a gift from God

First Published in *'The Catholic Voice'*, Ireland, April 2015



#### Marriage! The Prophetic Voices

##### **The Prophet is Derided in his own Country**

Whilst these articles deal in the main with the Catholic understanding of marriage and what has gone wrong with marriage in this country, it is impossible to deal with this subject without every so often, taking a look around at the prevailing climate of the times. In my last article I mentioned that God always sends prophetic voices amongst His people. However, more often than not, the prophet is derided in his own home and it is often the case that it is only the death of the prophet and the passage of time that allows us to look back and see the light that was shining in the darkness.

There were a few prophetic voices in Ireland in the late 1960s one of whom was a professor of moral theology and canon law in St Patrick's Seminary in Maynooth. He was also the only Irish theologian who was personally appointed as an expert to the second Vatican council by Pope Saint John XXIII. This theologian observed what was happening in Ireland after the second Vatican council. He saw how the celebration of the sacred liturgy was becoming banal on account of false interpretations of what was asserted at the council. He witnessed, and saw the dangers of, the change in the methods being used in our schools to teach the faith. Experiential learning was being favoured in opposition to the didactic method of instruction and he foresaw the damage that this new method would do to the children's faith. He worked behind the scenes with a number of concerned lay people and priests to help them to bring their concerns to Rome, but their initiative was undermined by those in authority.

##### **Silent no More**

Finally, in 1978, with the issuing of the Irish Bishop's statements concerning the proposed legislation on family planning which did not oppose such legislation, this professor could remain silent no longer. He gave an interview to a journalist, which he allowed to be published as a series of four articles in his name in the Irish Independent in November of that year. In these articles he masterfully expounds Church teaching and shows clearly why the bishops were in error in the statements that they made at that time.

##### **Emotions have replaced Reason as the basis for Living**

I personally find it very sad when I read what this professor had to say especially in light of what has happened within the Church in Ireland. There are those who say to me when I talk about this that I am being negative and sometimes may ask 'where is your good news John?' All I can answer is that the good news is to follow and that comments like that are part of the problem within our beloved Church. We have changed from the use of reason in addressing problems to the use of emotions and feelings.

This form of thinking says 'if looking back at what happened in the Church in Ireland is sad, we should not look at it because it produces negative emotions in us'. Imagine going to the doctor for tests, and he comes back and tells you that you have a serious cancer but not to dwell on it because your eyesight is one hundred per cent. We can see that this would be nonsensical for, whilst the cancer is bad news, having this bad news would allow you to deal directly with the problem and is the only way to fight against the adverse effects of the cancer and to cure the cancer if possible.

### **It is nonsense to dismiss the real causes of problems**

Similarly, it is just as nonsensical to ignore or to dismiss the real causes of the problems within the Catholic Church here in Ireland because if we do, then the problems will only get worse and more and more people will fall away from the faith which is the only hope of our salvation. The purpose of these articles is not to spread bad news but to identify the causes of the decline in marriage in Ireland so that together we can address those problems and help people to live out their married vocation with true human dignity. But we have to look at the bad news first before we can turn the problem around.

### **The Voice of the Prophet**

So what did this prophetic professor say? Well first of all he speaks of his distaste at having to do what he is about to do.

*“It should go without saying, that for one in my position it is quite distasteful to make a contribution that is necessarily critical of the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs by bishops, who, in communion and subject to the Supreme Pontiff, occupy the sacred office of rulers in the Church of Christ.”*

He then gives his reasons for speaking out at this time as seeking to give guidance to the faithful in light of the bishops statements regarding proposed family planning legislation which have led faithful Catholics, both priests and laity, to exclaim such things as “the bishops have sold the pass” or “The bishops have let us down” or “The bishops have abdicated their responsibility” and then he says;

*“But I am moved to make it (this contribution) because of the great seriousness of the matter in question.”*

### **Contraceptive legislation will lead in time to legalised Abortion, Divorce & Euthanasia**

The professor emphasised that the fact that must be faced, incredible as it may have seemed, is that by legalising the sale and importation of contraceptives the government was inevitably opening the door in due time to the legalising of abortion, of divorce, and, what he said people might find far fetched at that time, even euthanasia. Of course it is now easy to see how prophetic these concerns were in that we now have abortion legislation, divorce legislation, and the campaign for euthanasia and the killing of terminally ill unborn children is at an advanced stage.

He then says, *“Our traditional Irish Christian faith cannot ultimately survive if our Christian ethos is undermined and our Christian way of life demoralised, as a result of the passing of legislation which facilitates contraception and opens the way to the legalisation of abortion and other evils.*

*If that should come to pass, the question must be asked, and it will be asked by future generations of Irish men and women, how far the loss of our Christian faith must ultimately be laid at the door of the Irish Bishops of the time, who, in three statements on the proposed legislation on contraception, issued after their statement on ‘Ireland and Europe,’ failed to express their disapproval of the proposed legislation and provide their people and legislators with the lead which they needed.”*

### **The prophecies have come to pass**

Given that this professor of moral theology stated that legislation which would make contraception more widely available would in time lead to abortion legislation, to divorce legislation, and to the undermining of the Catholic faith in this country, and given that these things have all come to pass, for we now have abortion legislation, divorce legislation and the faith has been undermined just as he predicted, I intend to spend a little more time looking in greater detail at his analysis of this crisis because I believe that this will lead us to a fuller understanding of exactly what has gone wrong here in Ireland. I hope that this in turn will lead us to the solution to the marriage crisis in Ireland which is ultimately a crisis of faith.

© John Lacken 2015

These articles are free to download, to print and to distribute provided that authorship is acknowledged and contact details for the author are provided as follows.

Author: John Lacken  
Founder: Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family  
E-Mail: [john@truedevotions.ie](mailto:john@truedevotions.ie)  
Website: [www.truedevotions.ie](http://www.truedevotions.ie)